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Friday, August 14, 1942.

SUBJECT: "Canning and Drying Corn." Information from the home economists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

When you talk about food this time of year, corn is sure to come into the conversation. Americans who don't like corn are few and far between. Whether it's bright or pale yellow, grows on long ears or short, is served on the cob or off, corn is a favorite food with most people. Right now there's fresh sweet corn, straight from the fields. But before long and all too soon the season, will turn, so if you want corn later you must do something about it now.

And you can do something about it. You can store corn away so that it'll be excellent eating next winter when fresh corn is a thing of the past.

Canning and drying are both good ways to preserve corn. Most housewives are better acquainted with canning methods than drying. But now that war has brought a shortage of canning equipment, the old art of drying food is coming to the fore and adding science to it.

But let's put off talk about drying and consider canning for a moment. Let's talk about canning corn whole-grain style - a good way to put up corn for winter eating.

One of the most important things to remember about canning corn is to work fast. "Two hours from garden to can" is the rule to follow. Sugar in corn starts to turn to starch as soon as the car leaves the stalk. And other changes can take place, especially in hot weather, changes that may make your canned corn hard to keep if the corn stands around very long before it's put up. So make sure you use only freshly gathered corn, and can it quickly.

When you're ready to can, shuck and silk the corn. Then cut it from the cob, deeply enough to get off most of the kernels without taking the hulls too. And don't scrape the cobs when canning by the whole-grain method.

Put the corn in a kettle. Then add one teaspoon of salt per quart of corn and half as much boiling water as the corn weighs. This means you'll need about 2 cups of water to a quart of corn. Heat the corn to boiling, and pack it hot into glass jars or tin cans. And leave head space in those jars so the corn has "stretching" room when it's processed... one inch for glass, and one-half inch for tin cans is enough.

Of course, tin cans for canning are scarce this year because we need tin and steel plate for war uses. But if you do happen to have tin cans to use, be sure the cans have a C-enamel lining. Plain tin cans turn corn dark. The dark color is not dangerous to your health, or anything like that, but it does make the corn look unappetizing.

Once the corn is in the containers, put it right into the pressure canner. Always process canned corn under steam pressure in a regular pressure canner. It's not safe to can corn in a boiling water bath or in the oven. You see, corn is starchy, and heat goes through it slowly. But you must process it thoroughly to the very center of the jar to kill the bacteria that may make it spoil.

So play safe. Process your corn at 240° degrees Fahrenheit, or 10 pounds pressure. And here's the right processing time: 60 minutes for pint glass jars; 70 minutes for quart glass jars; 50 minutes for No. 2 tin cans; and 65 minutes for No 3 tin cans. When you're through processing, cool the corn thoroughly and store it in a cool, dry place - and a dark one too, for glass jars. If you don't cool the corn quickly enough, or store it in a cool enough place, "flat sour" may develop in it.

Well, I think that about covers canning corn the whole-grain way. Now for drying. There are 2 ways to dry corn - by controlled heat or by the sun. You need special equipment for drying by controlled heat. If you don't have it, you may dry by the sun, even though it does take longer.

Any good table corn, picked when it's just right to eat, is right for drying. And, as also the case for canning, work quickly so the corn doesn't stand around before you dry it.

First, husk the corn, and remove any blemishes it may have. You don't have to silk it because the silks separate easily from the kernels when they're dried. Steam the corn for 10 minutes, or boil it from 8 to 12 minutes - or until the milk is "set." You'll find a pressure cooker ideal for steaming corn, but if you don't have one use any steamer, large kettle, or deep container that has a tight cover. Steam the corn in a wire basket or colander set above the boiling water level.

When through steaming or boiling the corn, drain it, cool it, and cut it from the cob. Then, if you can dry it by controlled heat, put it on trays one-half to three-fourths inches deep and dry the corn at 130 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Stir it while it's drying, to separate the kernels. When drying, the corn should be moist to the touch and cooler than the air flowing over it. When it's thoroughly dry, it should be hard, brittle, and semi-transparent. And the kernels break cleanly when you crush then.

As soon as it's really dry, seal the corn in moisture-proof containers. Then store it in a cool, dark, dry place. And examine it once in awhile. If there's any sign of moisture, reheat the corn and reseal it in the containers.

If you don't have the equipment to dry corn by controlled heat, you can sun-dry it. Just spread small lots of the corn on wire trays or screens, or slat trays covered with thin cloth which let air circulate under the corn as well as over it. Or spread the corn on clean boards, heavy paper or clean cloth held in the place by laths.

You can dry corn on an outdoor shelf, a roof slanting toward the south, or in sunny windows. Stir it 2 or 3 times a day and be sure to take it in at night, or whenever it looks like rain. When the corn is dry, pack and store it in moisture-proof containers in a cool, dark, dry place.

Well, that's all about corn for today. If you are in doubt about canning directions, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for the home canning bulletin.

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